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EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

IN CIA

I. The Problem

An increasing number of programs utilizing the professional skills of psychologists are being developed in the various Agency components. Following is a partial list of specific incidents that have occurred within the past three or four months which illustrate the danger that development of independent psychological services in the Agency will lead to duplication of effort, unwitting interference with each other's programs, and confusion in the minds of the consumers:

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A. FE had started independently a screening program in [] without availing themselves of professional advice. FE later requested the Office of Training for a survey of this program, which resulted in OTR sending a two-man survey team of trained psychologists to the area.

B. FE had initiated the use of a completely untried intelligence test for screening purposes in another area.

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C. EE has been having a local psychologist, foreign-born and foreign-trained, doing assessments in the field. EE has now requested that we try to procure them a psychologist, [] with period of residence []

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D. An assessment program conducted by a psychologist on the Assessment and Evaluation Staff but independent of any control of this Staff has been conducted in FE. This program has recently been discontinued.

E. TSS has indicated an interest in procuring a consulting psychologist to work on the screening of indigenous personnel, a problem very closely related to the interest of the staff already aboard in Assessment and Evaluation.

F. Communications has an independent program of psychological testing concerning which the A & E Staff has only limited information.

G. A & E has recently received a call from an EE representative who is concerned with the problem of using tests in their organization.

H. The Medical Office has recently hired a psychologist to assist the Psychiatric Division.

I. The possibility has arisen that psychological testing done in Personnel will overlap with that already being conducted by A & E.

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J. The problem of the role of psychology and psychiatry in the screening of defectors is being studied by Chief, FI/ROM, in the ID/P.

K. O/O has approached the A & E Staff for assistance in dealing with defectors.

L. A recent proposal by the Medical Office to have a team of psychiatrists assess indigenous personnel for operating purposes has recently been proposed. It is understood that this request has been denied. NO.

M. At various times, such offices as SR have attempted to procure psychologists for their use in assessment and screening programs.

N. Graphology has been and perhaps is being employed as an aid to selection of indigenous personnel.

This list amply indicates the interest in the use of psychological techniques, but it also shows clearly the need for the development of a clear Agency policy concerning the use of psychologists and their relationships to operational and professional people in the Agency.

II. Recommendations

A. General

1. These policies be adopted:

a. Psychological services be concentrated in a single staff from which personnel can be rotated to provide services as needed. NO

b. Agency programs be subject to professional review and control when (1) tests or other techniques in which psychologists have special competence are used; (2) where psychological services are contemplated for the kind of programs already in existence in the Agency, e.g., assessment.

c. Psychological services be provided Agency personnel on an advisory basis, save for specific announced exceptions.

d. Psychological services be supported by a practically oriented research program.

(1) If recommendation A-1a, above, is rejected, the research program be assigned A & E, where an organizational element for such services already exists.

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2. These techniques be adopted:

a. A high-level committee, comparable to that used for review of projects, composed entirely of non-professional personnel be established to determine which Agency problems are of sufficient importance to warrant application of special psychological techniques. This committee can utilize the DCI-approved panel of psychological consultants.

b. For as long as separate psychological staffs and programs exist, a committee be established with representatives of the formal psychological programs and chaired by a lay person to insure coordination of psychological services and the implementation of Agency policies concerning them.

B. Specific Recommendations

1. Psychological services should be extended overseas, by the appointment of a psychological advisor to the senior or area representative in certain major areas.

a. As a trial of the effectiveness of this proposal, psychological advisors be appointed to Senior Representative, [] and Senior Representative, [] (These advisors will not only advise but perform certain psychological services such as assessment.)

2. Because of the special competence of psychologists in the area of prediction, and because of their major role in developing assessment procedures in CIA, the A & E Staff, OTR, be granted the major role in psychological assessment.

a. It is clearly recognized that the psychiatrist has exclusive jurisdiction over the diagnosis and implications of mental illness for Agency problems. He also plays a leading role where psychotherapy is concerned. As soon as this question of mental illness has been resolved in the negative, the role of psychological assessment comes into play in predicting what the individual will do under certain conditions. The relationship of psychology and psychiatry in this area should be a cooperative one. As a beginning in developing this relationship, it is recommended that as the psychiatric program is developed to the point where such services can be rendered, a psychiatrist participate in the assessment in the same place and at the same time it is being conducted by the psychologist. Each should make his independent recommendation to the operational personnel concerned.

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b. To avoid confusion in the minds of the consumers, it is recommended that the following principles be announced:

(1) Referral involving special area of psychiatry as defined immediately above should be made directly to the Medical Office.

(2) Referrals involving area of special psychological competence as defined immediately above should be referred to the A & E Staff.

(3) Doubtful cases should be referred to the A & E Staff as in the best position to screen them and as a measure of economy in utilizing the time of the psychiatrist.

3. While recommendations of the psychologist are advisory, to establish a wider basis for the rejection of such recommendations, all instances where action to be taken is contrary to them shall be reviewed by the next higher echelon over the person charged with the decision.

III. Kinds of Services That Can Be Provided by Psychologists

A. Possibility of Widespread Application

Psychology can be defined as a science "devoted to increasing our understanding of man." As a profession, its knowledge and services can aid in the solution of a wide diversity of problems. It is this possibility of widespread application which makes clearcut policies necessary concerning use of psychologists in a particular agency. Otherwise, a coordinated program designed for the solution of major problems of the Agency may never be developed; but psychological services will be frittered away on needs of the moment rather than oriented to long-range, important goals.

There are three principles which are basic to the application of psychological techniques to practical problems in a specific situation:

1. There is a need for familiarization with Agency operation and Agency problems before these techniques can be effectively applied. Not only is there need for understanding of the individual as an individual, but also of the situation in which he will find himself, before there is any possibility of making a prediction what the individual will do. It is people in a particular setting, and not people in general, which the psychologist is concerned with when he applies his techniques.

2. There is need for constant research to support the psychological program. The problems in this field are so complex that techniques designed for their solution must be constantly

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evaluated to insure that they are contributing to the Agency's needs and protecting the individual's welfare. Also, sharper tools need to be developed for many of the problems on which psychologists' advice is requested.

3. In selecting problems to be studied, there is need for close coordination with management. In general, management should determine which problems are of the greatest concern to them and which have the greatest need for solution. This generalization is subject to two qualifications: (a) The availability of techniques for the solution of a given problem. There is no point in posing problems to any profession if there are no suitable techniques available to study it. (b) That management state its requirements in long-range terms so that careful planning can be employed in developing methods to meet them.

B. Possible Areas of Application

In view of the wide range of the illustrative applications listed below, it is emphasized that these are not necessarily areas in which psychologists should be actively participating in the Agency but only situations in which psychologists could be employed. The areas are given to point out management problems in utilizing psychologists most effectively in a large organization.

1. Selection of Individuals. This selection can be negative—preventing the employment of certain kinds of individuals—or it can be positive—selection for specific jobs among those already on board. The selection can be on a screening basis or on a thorough-going assessment basis, depending on the type and importance of the job. Selection of individuals for supervisory positions or for a special covert assignment are illustrations.

2. Proper Placement or Utilization of Individuals. The orientation here is different from selection in that effort is made to find the best way or possible ways in utilizing an individual rather than evaluating him against the requirements of a particular job.

3. Evaluation of Individuals. The problems involved in merit rating or personnel evaluation have been subject to a great deal of research by psychologists and the solution to these problems is frequently aided by special projects. By what procedures and at what times should the judgment of supervisors be supplemented by psychological testing or assessment programs?

4. Evaluation of Procedures. The complete procedures involved in the recruiting and selection of individuals for employment of those involved in the selection of career employees can be evaluated by special studies. Psychologists are generally well trained in these research techniques.

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5. Training Appropriate Individuals in the Use of Psychological Concepts. Instructing supervisors in evaluation of subordinates or case officers in the significance of behavioral characteristics in evaluating potential agents are two examples.

6. Special Problems. These could include studies of the influences of management policies on Agency activities, development of procedures for assessing defectors, selection of men to act as a team in the undertaking of certain missions, studies of the status of morale and an analysis for the reason for good and poor morale—these are illustrations of problems to which psychological techniques could apply.

In view of the extensive nature of the above applications, it is again emphasized that these are listed as areas in which psychological techniques can be applied but are not set forth as the special province of psychologists. Generally speaking, management must decide whether a problem is of sufficient importance for the application of limited psychological resources.

IV. Relationship with Others

A. Relationship with Operational Personnel

It is recognized that everyone deals with psychological problems. A supervisor evaluates or assesses his subordinates. Any relationship between people involves psychological problems. What psychology can provide is specialized knowledge, concepts, and techniques to the solution of those problems which are considered important enough to warrant this expenditure of time and effort.

Since operational or supervisory personnel are charged with responsibilities for performing tasks, they need some leeway in carrying out their responsibilities. Generally speaking, psychological services should be provided on a purely advisory basis, letting the consumer determine whether to adopt the recommendations made. There might be occasional exceptions. For example, where a special selection procedure has been developed, cut-off scores could conceivably be established after consultation with the consumer; and these would be mandatory. Not only does the Agency profit more from use of psychologists in a staff capacity, but psychologists themselves function better in staff than line capacities, adapting their techniques to those problems which are considered most important at a given time. The philosophy here is one of helping Agency people to do a better job, and not in any way attempting to do it for them.

In the interests of bringing wider operational judgment to bear when recommendations are not accepted by the immediate supervisor, his decision should be subject to review by the next higher supervisory level. The principle here is that the review should be undertaken by someone who is sufficiently close to the problem so that he is in a position to understand the reason for rejection. Review by a too remote individual all too easily becomes a matter of decision on the basis of a general policy rather than on the specific circumstances.

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B. Relationships with Other Professions

There are two professions with which psychologists in any agency come into automatic relationship: with psychiatry and personnel. Both of these are dealing with what may be termed psychological problems. Concerning relationships with psychiatry, the principle that should govern is a cooperative one; both have something to contribute to the understanding of human behavior. The medical person, the psychiatrist, has a very specific and exclusive responsibility for evaluating mental illness and for psychotherapy. Psychologists do engage in psychotherapy, but only under conditions of close collaboration with physicians. Psychologists, on the other hand, have, by virtue of their special training and experience in the field of predicting behavior and accomplishment, and their intensive concern with the development of specialized testing techniques, have established a special claim to competence in this area. A comparison of the psychological literature with the psychiatric will show the validity of this point. While each profession has its area of special competence, as noted above, each should be permitted to contribute the problems that are involved in understanding human behavior. Any line drawn between functions of the two professions must be arbitrary to some extent.

The relationships with personnel arise from the fact that practically all personnel problems are psychological in nature. To repeat a point made earlier: this does not mean that psychologists should perform personnel functions. Three points are, however, implied: First, where psychological techniques such as tests are used, those with special competence and training in the use of these techniques should review and control the program. Second, where independent, professionally controlled testing programs exist, a mechanism need be set up to insure that there is no overlapping of effort, no interference of one program with the other, and no confusion caused in the minds of those exposed to the programs. Third, psychological research techniques can be utilized as an aid in solving some of the problems with which they are particularly concerned.

V. Career Management of Psychologists

Since psychological services are conceived to be primarily advisory in nature; since psychological techniques can be used in all components of the Agency; and since these problems and needs change from time to time, the best placement of psychologists is on one central staff from which services can be provided as needed. Experience has shown that psychological work is most effective in this kind of an arrangement. This arrangement has several clear advantages: (1) In the long run, it is more economical. Psychologists are not brought aboard and dropped after their special usefulness has been exploited for a particular purpose. (2) It saves time. Delay in furnishing psychological services is not caused by the need for seeking out and clearing people as each problem arises. It is always available in a trained staff. (3) Career development of psychologists can be managed not only to the advantage of their own career development,

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but also to make them useful to CIA in a wider variety of fields. (4) It makes for better long-range planning and consistency in the application of psychological techniques. It cannot be too strongly stressed that for some problems, consistency is more important than the particular procedure adopted.

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